

## The Effect of Partial Glossectomies on Patient Occupation

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**Introduction.** 25% of all cancer patients experience major disability post-surgery. A partial glossectomy (PG) is the current standard of care for malignant/precancerous oral cavity lesions of the tongue, however, little literature exists exploring its effects on patient perceptions and occupation. The current study explored the influence of PG surgery on patient workforce return, employment opportunities, and job security.

**Methods.** Patients who had received a PG within the past two years were recruited. Eligible patients (N = 8, M age = 48, 62.5% Female) were employed at time of diagnosis and had no other tongue-impacting pathologies. Surveys and semi-structured interviews assessed occupational changes and quality of life. Interview recordings were transcribed; principles of thematic analysis were used to analyze qualitative data. Inductive coding method was used to identify emergent patterns and salient themes.

**Results.** 75% reported needing to take extended time off work for recovery. 50% reported having flexibility and support from their employers. All patients experienced a change in skill or ability to use their mouth. 62.5% have mild vocal impairment or greater. 75% focus on issues with their speech regularly. While health-related quality of life decreased, the majority reported no significant changes in work. 12.5% of patients experienced a decrease in job quality. 25% required role change due to surgery.

**Conclusions.** Although patients were worried about the effect PG would have on their jobs, surgery did not significantly impact occupational quality. Future public health messaging should reinforce to patients and employers that PG's impact on occupational performance is minimal.